Evening Star Wed. July 19, 1967

Garrison Probe Reporter Defended by Kennedy

Star 7/19/67

NEW ORLEANS, La. (AP)—Newsman Walter Sheridan, accused by Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison of trying to thwart his John F. Kennedy assassination inquiry, has been strongly defended by the brother of the slain president.

Sheridan, 41, of Washington, an investigative reporter for the National Broadcasting Co., goes before the Orleans Parish grand jury today.

The jury has been hearing much of Garrison's case. The district attorney contends a plot was hatched in New Orleans to assassinate President Kennedy, who was killed in Dallas, Nov. 22, 1963.

Sheriff Louis Heyd Jr., handed Sheridan, a former FBI agent, a summons to appear before the grand jury as Sheridan waited in the clerk of court's office to post $5,000 bond. bond.

Sheridan voluntarily returned here and surrendered after Garrison filed charges against him 10 days ago, accusing him of trying to bribe a witness in the assassinatio probe into changing his story.

As Sheridan appeared here, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, D-N.Y., Sheridan had worked with N.Y., issued a statement noting that Sheridan had worked with both himself and President Kennedy.

"I have been fortunate to know and work with Walter Sheridan for many years," said Sen. Kennedy. "Like all those who have known him and his work, I have the utmost confidence in his integrity, both personal and professional.

"This view was shared by President Kennedy himself, with whom Mr. Sheridan was associated for many years in a relationship of utmost trust, confidence and affection."

"It is not possible that Mr. Sheridan would do anything which would in the slightest degree compromise the truth in regard to the investigation in New Orleans," Sen. Kennedy said.

Richard Townley, a reporter for WDSU-TV, NBC's New Orleans affiliate, pleaded not guilty to a similar bribery charge yesterday. He remained free under the $7,500 bond he posted when arrested last week.

Sheridan and Townley were charged after a June 19 NBC report examined Garrison's case against Clay L. Shaw and raised questions as to the ethics used by the district attorney and his investigators.

Garrison accused NBC of trying to wreck his case. Townley and Sheridan contend Garrison is using the powers of his office to intimidate anyone taking a skeptical look at his case.

Garrison has charged Shaw, 54, a wealthy retired businessman, with conspiring to murder President Kennedy. Shaw pleaded not guilty and is free on $10,000 bond. No trial date has been set.